

Dudley Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes of
December 5th Meeting

In attendance were:

Victor Kalgren
Krisanne Koebke
Paul Wheloch -
Linda Lorkiewicz

Meeting began at 7:00pm with a call to order by Victor Kalgren and said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kerri Salawa – Central MA Regional Planning couldn't attend the meeting as planned and needs to be rescheduled and come to a meeting at a later date.

John Briere gave an update on the Town of Dudley website. He has added the Agricultural Commission to the Town's website to include the Agricultural Commission Minutes, Agenda, Videos and Letterhead to feed automatically to the page. Right now, John is updating the website but the Agricultural Commission has the ability to get their own user id and password and designate their own person to do the updating if they want. John will provide 1 x 1 training.

John Briere's primary reason to be at the meeting was to discuss APR Land in Dudley. He was in touch with MDAR (MA Department of Agricultural Resources) because there may be a farm or 2 in Dudley coming up for APR program. APR is Agricultural Protected land where the Farmer sells the development rights to keep the land agricultural to permanently protect the land from development. This is good for the town and keeps the country feel for the town.

How it works: State comes up with a value for the development rights for the land. Then the state would pay 80% to the landowner for these rights and the town has to pay 20%. If the town doesn't pay their 20% share, the farmer will get 20% less of the value of the rights. Now that the town of Dudley has a Right To Farm By Law the states portion increases to 85% and the town's portion decreases to 15%. With the creation of the Agricultural Commission, the state is now required to pay 90% of the value of the development rights and the town is now responsible for 10%.

What is being proposed at this meeting and bring to the Board of Selectmen, is a form called Town of Dudley Land Certification. This form states landowner of the property located at the location is either enrolled in the APR Program and subject to its uses, restrictions and regulations or it is not. This form is to be included with any land permit processed in the town for any board. With this form the state will come up with another 5% so now their share for the development would now be 95% and the town's portion would now be only 5%. Good investment for the town. Would suggest to ask the town at every town meeting to put in an APR bank \$5 - \$10,000 so when land comes up for APR, the town isn't scrambling for money.

Paul Wheloch questioned why going to a board that they would need certification. John stated that the reason is the state is willing to come up with 5% more because the state doesn't have a process or safeguards for handing APR across the state. More of a notification for the state.

There was a discussion of Rights of 1st Refusal by town or state and also the strain of developing APR land. Possibly get someone from the state to attend one of the meeting with information on this.

John Briere – asked for a motion for the Agricultural Commission to show support this form and process for APR land and notification for permits. It will need to go to the Board of Selectmen in order for the other boards to use this form.

A discussion continued on the inclusion of the proposed APR Form included in the permitting process and who should retain copies.

John questioned setting aside land for community gardens. Paul Wheloch mentioned the Conservation Commission looked into that and there was an insurance liability issue as a non-profit but town might be different.

Victor suggested getting someone from the State, an APR person, in to answer questions for Farmers and to provide information for the Agriculture Commission in the event they are asked. Discussion continued what the process would be for the form.

The motion was said to read: “The Agricultural Commission is in support of the Town of Dudley establishing APR land certification as part of the permitting process”.

Paul Wheloch made motion that Dudley Ag commission support the Town of Dudley land certification for permitting of all Dudley Land. Krisanne Koebke second the motion and approved by a unanimous vote.

John Briere - Was going to reach out to Michelle from MDAR to present to the Agriculture Commission and to do an actual presentation. He also suggested that the Agricultural Commission look into when the town warrant is open to petition to put money in an APR land bank.

Goals & Logo discussion – Linda Lorkiewicz stated that the logos are done and Letterhead is being used on the website. She also spoke about Mass Farm Bureau Bulletin and articles that may be of interest to the Farmers, courses available and suggested putting some on the Facebook page. Can also put a link on Facebook to Mass Farm Bureau. Went over ideas for kids to do at our next farmers market. Next event, suggested doing a farmer’s market the same weekend as St. Andrew Babola’s festival. We could use the town hall parking lot for the farmer’s market. Linda to check on when and if the Festival is going to happen in 2020.

Paul Wheloch - Update on Signs. We need funds for the signs and banners and how to get funding. Suggested putting an article on the town warrant to see about funding for them. 2’ x 3’ signs \$55 each.

Open Discussion/New Business:

Paul Wheloch gave a shout out to Roger Meservey and his book ***Dairy Farms, Dairies and Milk Bottles of Dudley, MA***. This is for past and present farms/farmers. Includes articles and pictures of milk bottles and farms.

Victor discussed what to do for the January Meeting. It was decided to see if the Planner or State person wanted to attend. It was decided to cancel the Jan 2nd meeting and start back up for 2020 on February 6th.

Victor suggested making a motion to adjourn the meeting. Krisanne made the motion and Linda second.

Meeting ended at 7:49pm